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TAGS: AFIN SNAR ECON BG

SUBJECT: BANGLADESH: 2004/2005 END USE MONITORING REPORT

REF: STATE 222564

¶1. The End Use Monitoring Report for Bangladesh follows per reftel.

¶2. Procedures: Econoff visited the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) lab in Dhaka to examine the INL-funded equipment and to question personnel about its maintenance and use. Lab staff members were cooperative in showing the equipment and answering questions. Econoff also met with the Director General (DG) for the DNC, Mr. Shamsul Islam, who was Acting DG until recently. He is cooperative in sharing information and opinions, but has not yet visited the narcotics lab to view the equipment first-hand.

¶3. Status: INL has funded the purchase of several pieces of laboratory equipment for the DNC. All of the equipment sits in open-air rooms, exposed to dust and pollution, and most equipment appeared dirty. An analytical balance, a top-loading balance, and a polarizing microscope were donated to the DNC in July 2000. The analytical balance has malfunctioned because an internal circuit "burned" with power fluctuations; it remains unused on the laboratory counter. The top-loading balance and polarizing microscope are in good working order, although the polarizing microscope remains underutilized in a room separated from the rest of the lab. Of two lab technicians originally trained on the polarizing microscope, one has since left the DNC. The lab director could not state the purpose of the microscope, and thought it might have a camera feature. His assistant was able to demonstrate how the polarizing microscope can identify cannabis. Of the two high-powered microscopes donated in March 2005, one is used in the lab while the other is kept in storage to remain in new condition. The more sophisticated equipment is used only in the identification of cannabis, although chemical testing is the preferred means.

¶4. Problems: All of the problems related to the success of the program are internal to the BDG: the DG is still settling into his position, and has not yet visited the lab. According to him and to the lab director, there is not much BDG support for their facilities, and they remain understaffed. The main source of laboratory staff training in the last five years has been from the ICITAP. Extreme electricity fluctuations in the country have caused internal electric problems with the analytical balance.

¶5. Impact: The number of samples referred to the DNC lab has doubled from 2004 to 2005. Each seizure must be tested at this facility, where there are only two technically-trained staff members. They use INL equipment and training to identify more than 1,000 samples per month, and Bangladesh courts accept their results as evidence in narcotics cases. The impact of USG programs is clear, but is not fully realized because of apathy within the DNC and BDG.

¶6. Program Changes: Since the 2003/2004 report, staff at the DNC lab has been receiving its salary regularly. No other program changes have taken place.

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